

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1418

To promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 7, 1997

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. CRAIG, and Ms. LANDRIEU) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Methane Hydrate Re-
5 search and Development Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) CONTRACT.—The term “contract” means a
2 procurement contract within the meaning of 6303 of
3 title 31, United States Code.

4 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The term “co-
5 operative agreement” means a cooperative agree-
6 ment within the meaning of section 6305 of title 31,
7 United States Code.

8 (3) GRANT.—The term “grant” means a grant
9 agreement within the meaning of section 6304 of
10 title 31, United States Code.

11 (4) METHANE HYDRATE.—The term “methane
12 hydrate” means a methane clathrate that—

13 (A) is in the form of a methane-water ice-
14 like crystalline material; and

15 (B) is stable and occurs naturally in deep-
16 ocean and permafrost areas.

17 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
18 the Secretary of Energy.

19 (6) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—The term “Sec-
20 retary of Defense” means the Secretary of Defense,
21 acting through the Secretary of the Navy.

22 (7) SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.—The term
23 “Secretary of the Interior” means the Secretary of
24 the Interior, acting through the Director of the
25 United States Geological Survey.

1 **SEC. 3. METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP-**
2 **MENT PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—

4 (1) COMMENCEMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later
5 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this
6 Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Sec-
7 retary of Defense and the Secretary of the Interior,
8 shall commence a program of methane hydrate re-
9 search and development.

10 (2) DESIGNATIONS.—The Secretary, Secretary
11 of Defense, and Secretary of the Interior shall des-
12 ignate individuals to implement this Act.

13 (3) MEETINGS.—The individuals designated
14 under paragraph (2) shall meet not less frequently
15 than every 120 days to review the progress of the
16 program under paragraph (1) and make rec-
17 ommendations on future activities.

18 (b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE
19 AGREEMENTS.—

20 (1) ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION.—The
21 Secretary may award grants or contracts to, or enter
22 into cooperative agreements with, universities and
23 industrial enterprises to—

24 (A) conduct basic and applied research to
25 identify, explore, assess, and develop methane
26 hydrate as a source of energy;

1 (B) assist in developing technologies re-
2 quired for efficient and environmentally sound
3 development of methane hydrate resources;

4 (C) undertake research programs to pro-
5 vide safe means of transport and storage of
6 methane produced from methane hydrates;

7 (D) promote education and training in
8 methane hydrate resources research and re-
9 source development;

10 (E) conduct basic and applied research to
11 assess and mitigate the environmental impacts
12 of hydrate degassing, both natural and that as-
13 sociated with commercial development; and

14 (F) develop technologies to reduce the
15 risks of drilling through methane hydrates.

16 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may estab-
17 lish an advisory panel consisting of experts from in-
18 dustry, academia, and Federal agencies to advise the
19 Secretary on potential applications of methane hy-
20 drate and assist in developing recommendations and
21 priorities for the methane hydrate research and de-
22 velopment program carried out under this section.

23 (c) LIMITATIONS.—

24 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Not more
25 than 5 percent of the amount made available to

1 carry out this section for a fiscal year may be used
2 by the Secretary for expenses associated with the ad-
3 ministration of the program subsection (a)(1).

4 (2) CONSTRUCTION COSTS.—None of the funds
5 made available to carry out this section may be used
6 for the construction of a new building or the acquisi-
7 tion, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an exist-
8 ing building (including site grading and improve-
9 ment and architect fees.)

10 (d) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY.—In car-
11 rying out subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall—

12 (1) facilitate and develop partnerships among
13 government, industry, and academia to research,
14 identify, assess, and explore methane hydrate re-
15 sources;

16 (2) undertake programs to develop basic infor-
17 mation necessary for promoting long-term interest in
18 methane hydrate resources as an energy source;

19 (3) ensure that the data and information devel-
20 oped through the program are accessible and widely
21 disseminated as needed and appropriate;

22 (4) promote cooperation among agencies that
23 are developing technologies that may hold promise
24 for methane hydrate resource development; and

1 (5) report annually to Congress on accomplish-
2 ments under this Act.

3 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
5 as are necessary to carry out this Act.

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